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All 50 State Seals

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The Great Seal of Iowa



The Great Seal of the state of Iowa was made official by Iowa's first state legislature in 1847. The eagle and the scroll with the state's motto are also used on Iowa's flag. The motto reads "Our liberties we prize and our rights we will maintain." In the middle of the seal, a soldier stands in a field of wheat, holding an American flag. A cultivator rests in the field behind him, smoke trails from the chimney of a small cabin, and a ship steams through the water in the background.

State [Statute](#).

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Statehood

Iowa became the 29th state on December 28, 1846.

Capital City: Des Moines

Founded at the confluence of the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers; originally a military outpost.

Nickname: The Hawkeye State

The nickname was adopted early in the state's history. Two Iowa promoters from Burlington are believed to have popularized the name.

The Great Seal of the State of Iowa



The Great Seal of Iowa pictures a citizen soldier standing in a wheat field surrounded by farming and industrial tools, with the Mississippi River in the background. An eagle overhead bears the state motto.

Iowa Quarter: Nation's Only Education Quarter



In 2004, when Governor Vilsack and the head of the U.S. Mint unveiled the 29th commemorative quarter at the foot of the Iowa Capitol, the focus was on education. Schoolchildren, teachers and dignitaries were on hand for the unveiling. The Iowa quarter was introduced as "the nation's only education quarter." The coin features Iowa artist Grant Wood's "Arbor Day" painting of a schoolhouse and teacher with students planting a tree. The motto on the reverse is "Foundation in Education."

State Banner and Motto



The Iowa state flag stands for loyalty, justice and truth; the white for purity; and the red for courage. On the white center stripe is an eagle carrying in its beak blue streamers inscribed with the state motto: "Our liberties we prize, and we will maintain." The word "Iowa" is in red just below the streamers. All schools must fly the state flag on school days. The flag may also be flown on the sites of public buildings. When displayed with the United States flag, the state flag must be flown below the national emblem.

State Flower: Wild Rose



The 26th Iowa General Assembly designated the wild rose as the state flower in 1897. It was chosen for the honor because it was one of the flowers used on the silver service which the state presented to the battleship USS Iowa that same year. Although no particular species of flower was designated by the General Assembly, the wild prairie rose (Rosa pratincola) is most often cited as the official flower. Wild roses are found throughout the state and bloom from June through late summer. The flower, in varying shades of pink, is set off by many yellow stamens in the center.

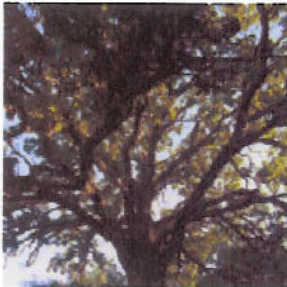
State Bird: Eastern Goldfinch



DON POGGENSEE

The Iowa General Assembly designated the eastern goldfinch, also the American goldfinch and the wild canary, as the official state bird. It was chosen as the state bird because it is commonly found in Iowa stays through the winter. Seeds from dandelions, sunflowers, ragwort, evening primrose are the main source of food for the eastern goldfinch (*carduelis tristis*). In late July or early August, goldfinches build their nests from plant materials and line them with thistledown. The pale blue-white eggs of the eastern goldfinch hatch after two weeks and then, following two to three more weeks, the young birds leave the nest. The female's head is topped with black and their bright yellow body also has black wings and tail. The female has a dull olive-yellow body with a brown tail and wings. The male goldfinch acquires the same dull plumage in winter months.

State Tree: Oak



DON POGGENSEE

The oak was designated as the official state tree in 1961. The Iowa General Assembly chose the oak because it is abundant in the state and serves as shelter, food and nesting cover for many animals and birds. It is difficult to find a tract of natural woodland in Iowa that does not have in it at least one species of oak. No other group of trees is more important to people and wildlife. Acorns, the nuts of oak trees, are a dietary staple of many animals and birds. Deer, wild turkeys, pheasants, quail, wood ducks, raccoons, squirrels, chipmunks, bluejays, nuthatches, grackles and several kinds of woodpeckers are a few of the species that depend on acorns for a portion of their diet.

State Rock: Geode



LESLIE ARMSTRONG

The Iowa General Assembly designated the geode as the official state rock in 1967. Because Iowa is well known for the presence of the geode, it was chosen as the official rock in an effort to promote tourism in the state. Legislators who favored making the geode the state rock pointed out that it was among the rarest and most beautiful of rocks and that Iowa is known worldwide because of the large number found in the state. Other rocks considered for official status were limestone and fossil coral. In Latin, geode means earthlike. Geodes are shaped like the earth and average four inches in diameter. Geodes are found in limestone formations with a hard outer shell. When carefully broken open, a sparkling lining of mineral crystals, most often quartz or calcite, is revealed. Geologists attribute the crystal growth to the percolation of groundwater in the geode's past. Southeastern Iowa is one of the state's best Geode collecting areas. Geode State Park in Henry is named for the occurrence of the geode.

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Kansas

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The Great Seal of Kansas



On May 25, 1861, the Kansas State Legislature adopted the state's seal. Per that resolution, the Great Seal of the State of Kansas would have this design: The east is represented by a rising sun in the right-hand corner of the seal; to the left of it, commerce is represented by a river and a steamboat; in the foreground, agriculture is represented as the basis of the future prosperity of the state by a settler's cabin and a man plowing with a pair of horses; beyond this is a train of ox-wagons going west; in the background is a herd of

buffalo, retreating, pursued by two Indians on horseback; around the top is the motto, "Ad astra per aspera," and beneath a cluster of thirty-four stars. The circle is surrounded by the words, "Great Seal of the State of Kansas January 29, 1861."

The words "Ad astra per aspera," are the the state's motto, meaning "To the stars through difficulties". The 34 stars identify Kansas as the 34th state to enter the Union.

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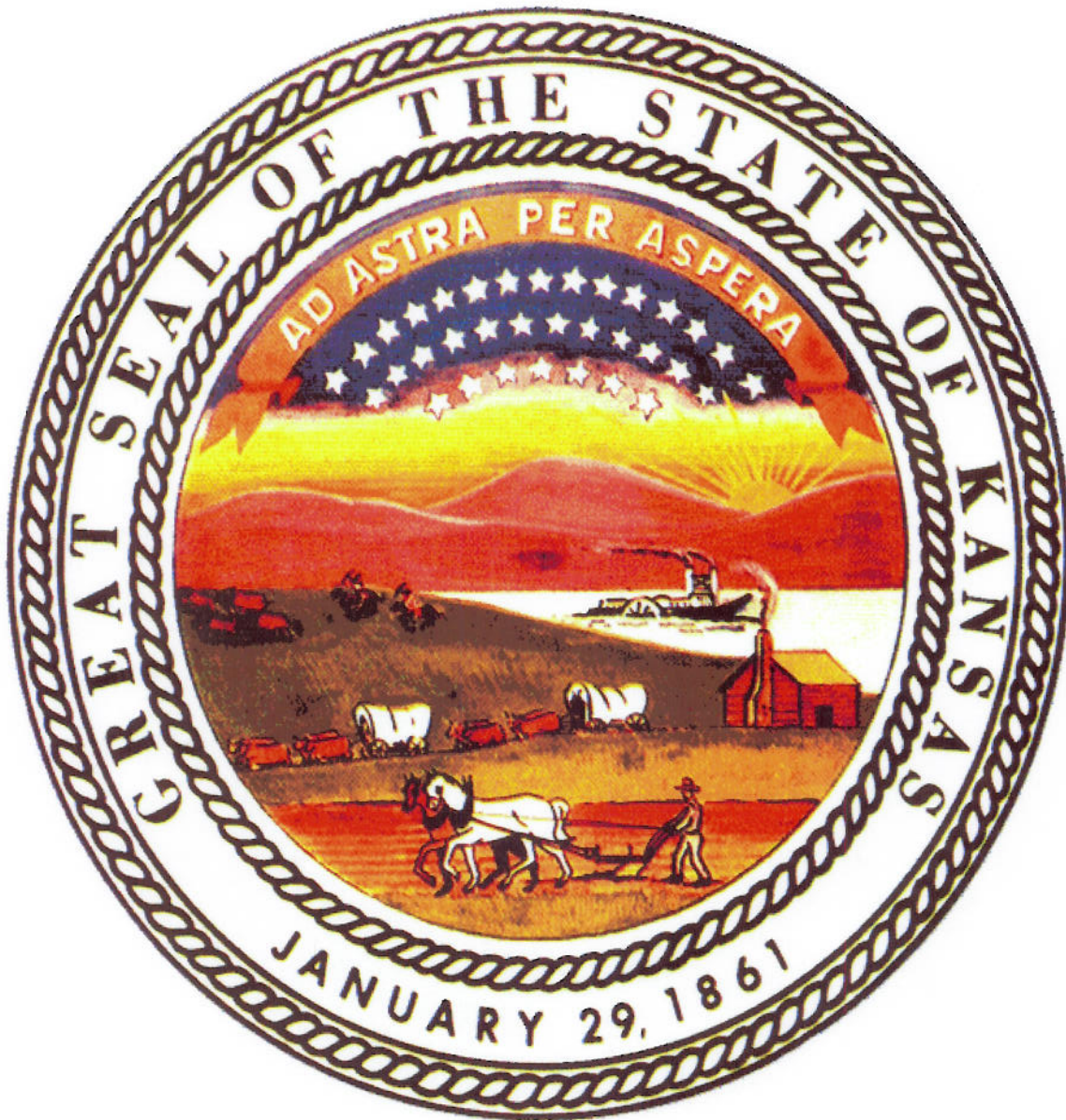
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Great Seal of the State of Kansas

The Great Seal of the State of Kansas was established by a joint resolution adopted by the Kansas Legislature May 25, 1861. The seal is described in the resolution as follows:

"The east is represented by a rising sun, in the right-hand corner of the seal; to the left of it, commerce is represented by a river and a steamboat; in the foreground, agriculture is represented as the basis of the future prosperity of the state, by a settler's cabin and a man plowing with a pair of horses; beyond this is a train of ox-wagons, going west; in the background is seen a herd of buffalo, retreating, pursued by two Indians, on horseback; around the top is the motto, 'Ad astra per aspera,' and beneath a cluster of thirty-four stars. The circle is surrounded by the words, 'Great seal of the state of Kansas. January 29, 1861.'"

The motto, "Ad astra per aspera," means "To the stars through difficulties," and was adopted as part of the Great Seal of the State of Kansas.



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Kentucky

The Great Seal of Kentucky



Kentucky's official seal was adopted in 1792, six months after Kentucky gained statehood. The seal is a simple rendition of two men, one in buckskin, and the other in more formal dress. The two men are facing each other and clasping hands. The outer ring of the seal is adorned with the words "Commonwealth of Kentucky", and within the inner circle is the motto "United we stand, Divided we fall."

The official act of the General Assembly in December 1792 stated: Be it enacted by the General Assembly, that the Governor be empowered and is hereby required to provide at the public charge a seal for this Commonwealth; and procure the same to be engraved with the following device, viz; 'Two friends embracing, with the name of the state over their heads and around about the following motto: United we stand, divided we fall.'

The two men on the seal haven't stood still for two centuries, however. Various versions have pictured both men dressed in buckskin, or both men in formal dress, men with and without hats, men with beards, men with wigs, and hand clasps that have ranged from simple handshakes to full embraces.

PDF Viewer required to read statute.



State [Statute](#).

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Kentucky's State Seal

The official seal of the Commonwealth was described in a bill passed by the General Assembly on December 20, 1792, shortly after Kentucky joined the Union. The original seal shows two friends embracing each other, with the words "Commonwealth of Kentucky" over their heads and around them the words "United We Stand, Divided We Fall." By custom (and now in conformity with the description of the flag contained in the statutes), two sprigs of goldenrod in bloom are shown in the lower portion of the seal. The official colors of the seal are blue and gold.



Most historians believe that the patriotism of Kentucky's first governor, Isaac Shelby, was the inspiration for the state's choice of the motto "United We Stand, Divided We Fall." Shelby, a hero of the Revolutionary War for his victory at the Battle of Kings Mountain, was fond of "The Liberty Song," written 1768 by John Dickinson. The chorus of song includes: "They join in hand, brave Americans all, By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall." Another song that was popular at the time was "The Flag of Our Union," written by George Pope Morris, that also contained a similar line: "United We Stand, Divided We Fall." But most historians believe that the song by Dickinson was the ultimate source.

The origin for the concept of strength in unity can be traced all the way back to the one of the fables of Aesop, in which he shows that sticks one by one may be readily broken, but cannot when several are bound together in a bundle. The moral being, "Union gives strength."

The state's seal has undergone several changes throughout its 200+ years of existence. The original seal was commissioned to engraver David Humphries for price of 12 pounds sterling. Although Isaac Shelby's initial conception of the seal depicted two pioneers in buckskins, with their hands clasped as they stood on a precipice, Humphries' version imposed the men, dressed in swallowtail coats, embracing in a bear hug so tight that one of the men's heads is obliterated by the other's. After developing both a seal and press for the Commonwealth, Humphries' work was destroyed in 1814 when a fire burned down the state capitol.



Other versions of the seal include that of one man in breeches and another in a frock coat. Rather than embracing, they clasp hands in an awkward stance. Some historians/humorists attribute this version to the rumor that all Kentuckians, at the time, drank excessively, and that these two men found it necessary to support each other in their effort to stand: "United We Stand, Divided We Fall."

In order to keep the design of the seal consistent in the



future, the Kentucky legislature passed an act in 1962 ([KRS 2.020](#)) which described the official seal as a pioneer meeting a gentleman in a swallowtail coat. The formally dressed man on the right represents England coming to Kentucky. The man in buckskin, on the left, is from the frontier. Shaking hands, they are uniting the colonial and pioneer aspects of the "Commonwealth." This seal was on Kentucky's representative flag for the Apollo moon mission, as well as being on current historical markers throughout the state.

In 1942, state's official seal was placed under the responsibility the Kentucky Secretary of State. ([KRS 14.030](#))

For information about Kentucky's official state symbols, visit the [state symbol web page](#).

Lyrics to the Liberty Song (1768)

Come, join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
And rouse your bold hearts at fair Liberty's call;
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just claim,
Or stain with dishonor America's name.

Chorus -

In Freedom we're born and in Freedom we'll live.
Our purses are ready. Steady, friends, steady;
Not as slaves, but as Freemen our money we'll give.

Our worthy forefathers, let's give them a cheer,
To climates unknown did courageously steer;
Thro' oceans to deserts for Freedom they came,
And dying, bequeath'd us their freedom and fame.

Chorus

The tree their own hands had to Liberty rear'd,
They lived to behold growing strong and revered;
With transport they cried, Now our wishes we gain,
For our children shall gather the fruits of our pain.

Chorus

Then join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall;
In so righteous a cause let us hope to succeed,
For heaven approves of each generous deed.

Chorus (repeated twice)




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Louisiana

The Great Seal of Louisiana

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The official state seal of Louisiana was adopted in 1902. It features a pelican tending its three young chicks in their nest. The story is that the pelican is actually tearing some of its own flesh to feed the chicks, which apparently a pelican will do rather than allow its young to starve. This seal has changed over the years, and at one point there were a dozen chicks in the nest. Since pelicans normally do not have large numbers of chicks at one time, the present version is more realistic. It also makes you feel a bit better knowing that the pelican doesn't have to pull itself apart for more

than three of the young. The Louisiana motto "Union, justice, confidence" surrounds the birds on the present seal.

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Louisiana's Official Family

Louisiana's government, like that of the United States, has three branches -- legislative, executive and judicial.



The legislature is composed of a Senate of 39 members and a House of Representatives of 105 members, with members of both being elected to four-year terms. The legislature meets in regular session in odd-numbered years on the last Monday in March for not more than 60 legislative days during a period of 85 calendar days. In even-numbered years, the legislature convenes on the last Monday in April for 30 legislative days during 45 calendar days. The legislature may be convened at other times by the governor, and shall be convened by the presiding officers of both houses upon written petition of a majority of the elected members of each house. Parliamentary procedure and committee organization resemble that in use throughout the nation.

Executive power is vested in the state's elected officials: governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, treasurer, commissioner of agriculture and forestry, commissioner of insurance, and commissioner of elections and registration. All these officials are elected for four-year terms.



The present judicial system, originally established by the Louisiana Constitution of 1921, affords judicial power in a state supreme court, courts of appeal, district courts, and other lesser tribunals as provided by law. The supreme court has general supervisory jurisdiction over all courts. Courts of appeal have appellate jurisdiction over five circuits of the state. District courts have original jurisdiction over appeals from justices of the peace and certain minor courts. Judges in Louisiana are elected except where they are temporarily appointed to fill vacancies.

For more information about Louisiana's branches of government and officials, visit the links pages in [All Around Louisiana](#).

The Old State Capitol

Designed and constructed by architect James Dakin, the Old State Capitol became Louisiana's seat of government in January, 1850. During the following decade, the majestic "castle on the Mississippi" served as the

political, social and cultural heart of the state. Dramatic debates in the somber halls and courtly gatherings on the grounds reflected the mixture of tension and grace which characterized the antebellum South.

In January, 1861, Louisiana seceded from the Union, and a short time later, the state formally joined the new southern confederacy. A year later, Union forces advanced up the Mississippi River and seized Baton Rouge. Louisiana's confederate government sought refuge in Opelousas and later in Shreveport. In December of that year, Union soldiers stationed in the Old State Capitol were responsible for a fire which gutted the building, and it stood gaunt and hollow until its first restoration was completed in 1882.



In 1932, a new state capitol building was completed, and local citizens successfully worked to save the Old State Capitol from demolition. For years, it was used to house numerous agencies and commissions. In 1990, custody of the building was granted to the Office of the Secretary of State, and, in 1991, the most extensive and comprehensive internal renovation since 1882 began. In its new incarnation as [The Old State Capitol Center for Political and Governmental History](#), the building truly blends the grandeur of the past with the promise of the future.

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Maine

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The Great Seal of Maine



In June of 1820, three months after Maine became a state, the legislature drafted the design of the state seal. Since that time, there have been variations in the details of the seal, but the overall design and images remain true to the spirit of that legislative session. The center of the seal is a shield adorned with a tranquil scene of a moose resting in a field bordered by water and woods, with a pine tree standing tall directly behind the moose. On either side of the shield, a farmer rests on his scythe, and a sailor leans on an anchor. Above the

shield is the motto "Dirigo" ("I lead"), and a stylized North Star. And below the shield is a banner that simply reads "Maine". The legislature of 1919 decided that the design of the seal should no longer vary, and froze the design, and it is still used today.

State [Statute](#).

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Maine Constitution

Maine State Seal

The Great Seal of the State of Maine

In the Custody of the Department of the Secretary of State
Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions
101 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333
Phone (207) 624-7736 FAX (207) 287-5874
[View an image of the Great Seal](#)

What is it?

It is an embossed image on a heavy cast iron embosser; there are several smaller embossers also, used for different purposes. These tools impose a raised imprint on official public documents. By law (Title 5 Section 81) the Seal is in the custody of the Secretary of State. But strictly speaking, the Seal is an image, whether embossed or embroidered, printed or projected, described in Maine law in Title 1 Section 201:

The seal of the State shall be a shield, argent, charged with a pine tree (americana, quinis ex uno folliculo setis) with a moose (cervus alces), at the foot of it, recumbent; supporters: on dexter side, a husbandman, resting on a scythe; on sinister side, a seaman, resting on an anchor.

In the foreground, representing sea and land, and under the shield, shall be the name of the State in large Roman capitals, to wit:

MAINE.

The whole shall be surrounded by a crest, the North Star. The motto, in small Roman capitals, shall be in a label interposed between the shield and crest, viz.: -- DIRIGO.

Date of design:

Maine became a state on March 15, 1820 and the Legislature adopted the language governing the Seal's design on June 9. The description had been drafted by a short-lived Committee under the direction of first Senate President William Moody. Colonel Isaac G. Reed of Waldoboro is credited with the Seal's description and explanation. Note the archaic language in the above statute, still alive in Maine law; the Latin phrase for the pine tree derives from a classification system no longer used by botanists, for example.

The actual appearance of the Seal has varied over the years. All of the variations have been based on the language above. The first sketch of the Seal was markedly different from the above; the "moose" looked like a deer, the shield was more conventional, the scythe was held with the blade on the ground. Later

variations included the scythe being held behind the husbandman's head, and in one case, the inexplicable substitution of a sextant for the mariner's anchor. There is little statutory guidance for coloring the Seal other than the description of the blue-background State Flag in Title 1 Section 206. The present design was fixed by the Legislature in 1919.

Use of the Seal

Non-commercial use of the Seal by state agencies, on letterheads or videos for example, is unregulated. Use of the Seal for commercial purposes is governed by Title 1 Section 204 and requires permission from the Governor (1 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333. [e-mail](#).).



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Maine Secretary of State

Kid's Page



Maine State Symbols



Maine State Seal

The seal of the State shall be a shield in silver, on it is a pine tree with a moose lying at the foot of it; on the left side of the shield is a farmer resting on a scythe; on the right side, a seaman, resting on an anchor.

In the foreground, representing sea and land, and under the shield, shall be the name of the State in

large Roman capitals: MAINE

The whole shall be surrounded by a crest, the North Star. The motto, in small Roman capitals, shall be in a label resting between the shield and the crest reading: DIRIGO (I lead).

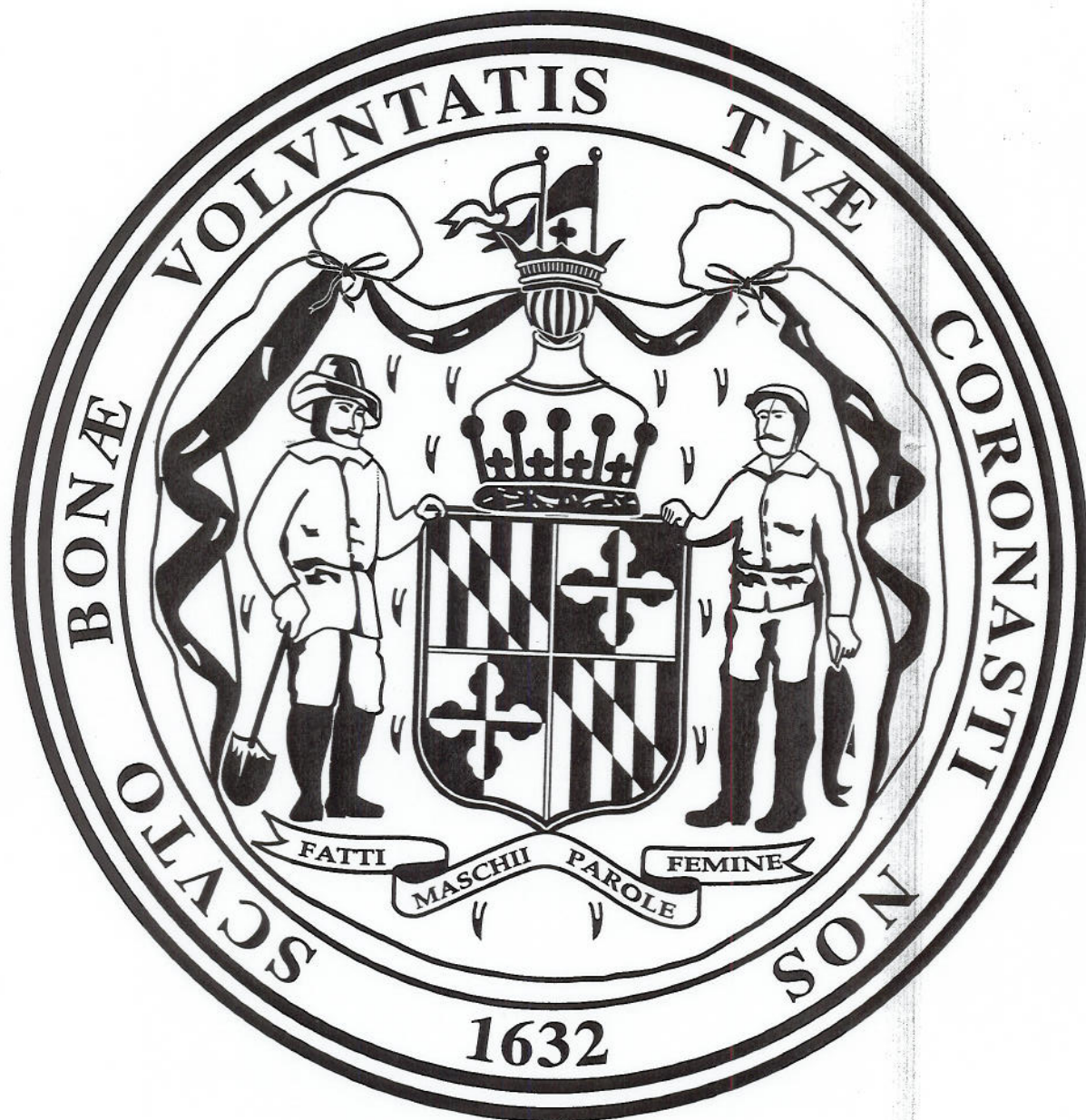
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Maryland

The Great Seal of Maryland



The great seal of Maryland was adopted in 1876 by the General Assembly. The seal actually consists of an obverse and a reverse side, although it is the reverse side that is usually seen. During its history, Maryland has used several seals, including a new design during the time of the American Revolution, when Maryland's seal was more in line with the seals of the other states. The design of the present seal goes back to the days of the original settlements in Maryland, and is based upon a seal that was sent

from England at that time. On the obverse side is a mounted knight (Lord Baltimore). The reverse shows a farmer, a fisherman, a shield, and a coat of arms.

State [Statute](#).

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MARYLAND AT A GLANCE

STATE SYMBOLS

Maryland State Seal - Great Seal of Maryland



The Great Seal of Maryland is used by the [Governor](#) and the [Secretary of State](#) to authenticate Acts of the [General Assembly](#) and for other official purposes. The Secretary of State is the designated custodian of the Great Seal, and provides guidance on its use.

Only the **reverse** of the Great Seal has ever been cut. In 1959, however, the **obverse** was described in statute and has been considered part of the Seal (Chapter 396, Acts of 1959). Often, it adorns public buildings.

The first Great Seal was brought over during the early days of the Maryland colony, but was stolen by Richard Ingle during his rebellion of 1645. [Cecilius Calvert](#), 2nd Lord Baltimore, sent a similar seal from England in 1648 for the use of the Maryland Chancellor. Except for the period of crown rule (1692-1715), that Great Seal remained in use until the end of the 18th century, the Maryland Council having authorized continued use of the provincial seal on March 31, 1777 (Constitution of 1776, sec. 36).

A new seal with republican imagery was adopted by the Governor and Council on February 5, 1794. Designed by [Charles Willson Peale](#), the [Maryland Seal of 1794](#) remained in use until 1817. In that year, the General Assembly adopted a single-sided Great Seal bearing an eagle holding a shield. Another seal authorized in 1854 depicted an eagle and a version of the Calvert arms (Chapter 81, Acts of 1854).

Maryland readopted the reverse of the original Calvert seal in 1874 (Joint Resolution no. 9, Acts of 1874; Joint Resolution no. 5, Acts of 1876). This new seal corrected the imagery of the Calvert arms in the seal of 1854. It is the seal in use today. In 1959, the General Assembly adopted the seal by statute and codified its description (Chapter 396, Acts of 1959). Later revisions to the law were enacted in 1969 (Chapter 79, Acts of 1969; Code State Government Article, secs. 13-101 to 13-105).

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